

DEPARTMENT OF

RELIGIONS AND CULTURES

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

COURSE GUIDE

2025-2026

**DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE GUIDE
2025-2026**

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This course guide has been prepared months in advance of the 2025-2026 academic year and information contained herein is subject to change. Students are advised not to purchase any texts without the approval of the professor concerned.

Due to the renumbering of courses in the Department, students should consult the list of equivalent undergraduate courses in the back of the 2025-2026 undergraduate calendar.

FACULTY

A list of the full-time faculty follows below. All possess degrees from universities and/or schools of advanced studies that represent the best academic centres for the study of religion in North America. All have published books that have made a contribution to their particular fields of study, have published in learned journals and given papers at learned societies. They have also won a reputation among their students for being good teachers, concerned about the quality of instruction at Concordia University, as well as for being "available" and committed to the development of a more meaningful student life.

Full-Time Faculty

Chair

Naftali Cohn, Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)

Professors

Lynda Clarke, Ph.D. (McGill) (sabbatical 2025-2026)

Carly Daniel-Hughes, Ph.D. (Harvard)

(sabbatical winter 2026)

Marc des Jardins, Ph.D. (McGill)

Lorenzo DiTommaso, Ph.D. (McMaster)

Richard Foltz, Ph.D. (Harvard)

(sabbatical winter 2026)

Leslie Orr, Ph.D. (McGill)

Norman Ravvin, Ph.D. (Univ. of Toronto)

Associate Professors

Miranda Crowds, PhD (The City University, London)

Assistant Professors

Sowparnika Balaswaminathan, PhD (University of California)

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

General Objectives

The Department of Religions and Cultures is dedicated to the academic study of multiple religious and cultural groups in Canada and around the world. Our focus is on cultural phenomena, sometimes in comparative context, typically with attention to history, systems of thought and practices, literature and pop culture, power, gender, and sexuality.

Nature of the Study of Religions and Cultures

The academic study of religion is a multidisciplinary enterprise. Current emphases in the department include decolonizing, gender and sexuality, feminism, intersectionality, history,

ethnography and fieldwork, literature, moving images, pop culture, systems of thought, and ethics.

KNOWLEDGE OF TWO MAJOR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

The Department believes that every Major or Honours student in Religion or in Judaic Studies should possess, at time of graduation, a knowledge of at least two major religious traditions. For example, the student who is pursuing a Major in Judaic Studies will take some courses in a religious tradition other than Judaism. This basic principle reinforces the emphasis upon the centrality of the discipline of the History of Religions. A particular religious tradition can best be understood in the context of the general religious history of humankind.

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMMES

The Department of Religions and Cultures offers at the undergraduate level: minors, majors and honours programmes in Religion and in Judaic Studies. The degree requirements for all of these programmes can be found below. We also offer several graduate programmes: an M.A. in Religions and Cultures, an M.A. in Judaic Studies, and a Ph.D. in Religion. For further information on our graduate programmes, please contact the MA graduate programme director: Lynda.clarke@concordia.ca

Women, Gender and Sexuality

As part of the Department of Religions and Cultures' undergraduate curriculum, a concentration in **Women, Gender, and Sexuality** is offered. A variety of special courses are included in the regular program for the BA major in Religions and Cultures. Religions and Cultures majors can focus on this area for either the primary or secondary concentration requirements.

The study of women and religion is a growing field in which the Department of Religions and Cultures of Concordia University has long been a leader. This structured concentration solidifies our commitment to this field and enables us to prepare students in a systematic and consistent fashion. The concentration furthers the work of the department in that it will allow students to pursue course work from a comparative, cross-cultural and multi-tradition perspective. The study of the role of women in the history and practice of religion introduces our students to an exciting and vital area of study.

Degree Requirements

60 B.A. Honours in Religions and Cultures:

- 12 cr in a language related to thesis; or in a related discipline such as Anthropology, Classics, English Literature, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Women's Studies
- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 15 cr chosen from the following groups: Tradition; Region
- 12 cr chosen from the following groups: Themes in Religions and Cultures; Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- 6 cr chosen from Religions and Cultures courses at the 300 or 400 level
- 3 cr RELI 409 Methodology and the Study of Religion
- 6 cr RELI 410 Honours Thesis

42 B.A. Major in Religions and Cultures

- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 15 cr chosen from the following groups: Tradition; Region
- 12 cr chosen from Themes in Religions and Cultures; Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- 3 cr RELI 409 Methodology and the Study of Religion

24 Minor in Religions and Cultures

- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 18 cr additional elective Religions and Cultures courses at the 200, 300, and 400 level

60 B.A. Honours in Judaic Studies

- 9 chosen from: HEBR 210⁶, HEBR 241, HEBR 242, RELI 401
Students who demonstrate fluency in Hebrew by a written examination may substitute RELI courses at the 300 and 400 level approved by the departmental advisor.
- 3 chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215
- 12 chosen from RELI 220, 301, 326, 327, 328
- 27 chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course. Up to 12 credits may be substituted with courses in a related language such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish, for a maximum of 15 credits combined.

42 B.A. Major in Judaic Studies

- 9 cr Hebrew language, chosen from HEBR 210, 241, 242, RELI 401
*students who demonstrate proficiency in Hebrew may substitute religions courses at the 300 or 400 level approved by the undergraduate advisor
- 3 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215

- 15 Electives chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course. Up to six credits may be substituted with courses in related traditions and related languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish.
- 3 RELI 409³

24 Minor in Judaic Studies

- 3 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214^{3 a} 215³
- 9 Chosen from RELI 220³, 301³, 326³, 327³, 328³
- 12 Electives chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. Up to six credits may be substituted with courses in related traditions and related languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish

24 Minor in Iranian Studies

- 12 Chosen from RELI 227³, 305³, 306³, 313³, 317³, 318³
- 12 Chosen from any courses related to Iran in various departments at Concordia approved by the undergraduate advisor, including those not already taken at the first level of requirement. Examples of courses offered at various times include Pahlavi and other ancient Iranian languages, Modern Persian, Iranian Mythology, Manichaeism, Avesta, and Classical Persian Music. Students may also request credit for Iran-related courses taught at other Quebec universities.

Course Groups:

Tradition

RELI 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 230, 231, 301, 307, 308, 311, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 324, 326, 327, 328, 332, 333, 334, 336, 337, 343, 344, 346, 350, 351, 363, 364, 368, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 390, 391, 392, 394, 395, 397, 401, 402, 404, 405, 407

Region

RELI 214, 215, 227, 306, 308, 315, 329, 332, 334, 336, 347, 348, 351, 353, 360, 361, 362, 375, 393

Themes in Religions and Cultures

RELI 209, 210, 216, 235, 298, 300, 310, 312, 325, 331, 354, 355, 357, 358, 365, 366, 370, 371, 373, 374, 378, 379, 394, 396, 398, 410, 496, 498

Women, Gender, and Sexuality

RELI 233, 372, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 393, 420

Southern Asia Studies

The Department of Religions and Cultures participates with History, Political Science and several other departments in the Southern Asia Studies Programme which offers a major and a minor as follows:

MAJOR in Southern Asia Studies (42 credits)

3 cr chosen from:

RELI 215 Religions of Asia

RELI 348 Religion and Society in South and Southeast Asia

3 cr chosen from:
HIST 261 History of South Asia
HIST 364 Modern South Asia

3 cr chosen from the following group:
History of South and Southeast Asia courses (see UG calendar)

9 cr chosen from the following group:
Religions and Cultures of South and Southeast Asia courses (see UG calendar)

6 cr chosen from the following group:
Theory and Method courses (see UG calendar)

18 cr chosen from the following group:
Electives in South and Southeast Asia (see UG calendar)

Minor in Southern Asia Studies (24 credits)

3 cr chosen from:
RELI 215 Religions of Asia
RELI 348 Religion and Society in South and Southeast Asia

3 cr chosen from:
HIST 261 History of South Asia
HIST 364 Modern South Asia

18 cr chosen from the following group:
Electives in South and Southeast Asia (see UG calendar)

30 Certificate in Iranian Studies

- 18 Chosen from RELI 227³, 305³, 306³, 313³, 317³, 318³
12 Chosen from any courses related to Iran in various departments at Concordia approved by the undergraduate advisor, including those not already taken at the first level of requirement. Examples of courses offered at various times include Pahlavi and other ancient Iranian languages, Modern Persian, Iranian Mythology, Manichaeism, Avesta, and Classical Persian Music. Students may also request credit for Iran-related courses taught at other Quebec Universities.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Lynda Clarke: Lynda.clarke@concordia.ca

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

Student Advising

Students who have questions concerning their programme of study or need assistance relating to academic difficulties can contact the Department either by phone (848-2424, ext. 2065) or email religion@concordia.ca and make an appointment to meet with an undergraduate advisor.

Undergraduate Listserve

Religion students and students taking one or more Religion courses have the option of being added to the Religion Undergraduate listserve. This listserv helps to keep students informed of upcoming events, guest speakers and academic deadlines.

Department Web Page

Visit the Department's webpage and find information on the various courses offered, course outlines, faculty research interests, guest lectures and conferences, information on our graduate programmes plus much more:

<https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/religions-cultures.html>

THE BOYD SINYARD AWARD

Each year the Boyd Sinyard award is given to the outstanding graduating student in Religions and Cultures. The award is named after the first chairman of the Department of Religion at Sir George Williams University.

CONCORDIA RELIGIONS AND CULTURES STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (CRACSA)

If you are studying within the Department of Religions and Cultures (i.e. if you are an Honours, Major, Minor or just taking a course offered by the department), you are a member of the CRACSA. CRACSA is a student-administered organization dedicated to fostering community and expanding the educational experience of all Religion students. Each year the executive branch of CRACSA (five students elected to plan and administer CRACSA affairs) offers Religion students the chance to meet each other and faculty at various social gatherings, as well as the opportunity to enliven their education by attending CRACSA sponsored lectures given by learned academics and religious thinkers from all parts of the world. CRACSA members are urged to take advantage of the student lounge located in the basement of annex R (2050 Mackay). This is a place where students can study, hang out or use the free phone. If you would like more information about CRACSA, leave a message in our mailbox at the Department of Religions and Cultures.

SUMMER 2025

RELI 215/1 - A (3 credits)
RELIGIONS OF ASIA

M.W. 1315-1600

This course surveys the history, doctrines, institutions, and practices of religions that have arisen in and spread throughout Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and the religions of China and Japan. The course explores the religious activities and experiences of both women and men within these traditions.

RELI 378/1 - A (3 credits)
DEATH AND DYING

T.J. 1015-1300

This course provides a comparative perspective on the variety of conceptions and practices related to death and dying that are found in different world religions. In addition, the course considers how people in contemporary North American society utilize traditional religious concepts and rituals, scientific understandings and medical procedures, or innovative combinations of ideas and practices with which to cope.

FALL 2025

RELI 209/2 – A (3 credits) THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

W.F. 1145-1300

This course explores the conceptual elements that underlie the religious experience. These elements include the notion of the sacred, beliefs, cosmologies and myths, the origins and understanding of evil, ethics and salvation. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 211 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 214/2 – A (3 credits) RELIGIONS OF THE WEST

W.F. 08:45-10:00

This course surveys the history, doctrines, institutions, and practices of religions that arose in Western Asia, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course examines contemporary forms of religious life in those parts of the world where these traditions have spread, as well as indigenous religions. The course explores the religious activities and experiences of both women and men within these various traditions.

RELI 220/2- A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

M.W.0845-1000

This course will examine the history of Jews and of Judaism from ancient times until the present. It will emphasize the continuities, changes and interrelationships with respect to Jewish social, religious and intellectual life through the ages. It will also carefully examine the varieties of belief and practice in contemporary Jewish life. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 222 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 224/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

T .J..0845-1000

This course explores the religious tradition of Islam through the beliefs and practices of the vast number of Muslims scattered throughout the world – in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, North America, and other places. It examines the scriptures and common rituals or “pillars” of the religion, as well as expressions of life and culture in the past and present such as the law (shariah), mystical orders, and the arts.

RELI 225/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

M.W.1015-1130

Hinduism is a tradition that is one and many, consistent and chaotic, fixable and constantly evolving. The idea of Hinduism as a singular religion has been argued to be a colonial disciplinary practice. Thus, with diverse philosophical strains of thought about the meaning and goal of life, the existence of divine presence(s), the quality of matter and the self, and the practical ways in which an individual can and should lead their life, Hinduism is a catch-all term for often contradictory beliefs. Furthermore, the proximity of multiple religious traditions in South Asia has led to syncretic practices, wherein the lines between religious, cultural, and secular can blur and shift. In this course, students will encounter the various ways in which Hinduism has been imagined, disciplined, and practiced, through sacred texts and commentaries, scholarly debates, practices and rituals, and aesthetic, visual, and performative traditions. We will examine beliefs and practices that can be canonically categorized as Hindu, as well as those that challenge such categorization, and others that demand a change in the definitional boundaries of

Hinduism. Lastly, we will also look at how power and hierarchy are woven through this tradition, and discuss historical and contemporary political issues relevant for understanding how Hinduism functions in today's world, and what "modern" Hindus would consider a good life. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 227/2 – AA (3 credits)

W. 17:45-20:15

INTRODUCTION TO IRANIAN CIVILIZATION

Iran has played a central role in world history, giving rise to Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and the Baha'i faith, as well as numerous minor sects. Iranian culture has also played a major role in informing and transforming Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. This course covers the long history of Iranian civilization and its influence on peoples from the Mediterranean world to South and East Asia in the realms of religion, literature, architecture, and the arts.

RELI 300/2 – A (3 credits)

M. 1745-2015

CULTS AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

This course takes a sociological and historical approach towards understanding new religious movements (NRMs), popularly known as "cults." The course examines the reasons for their controversial status in society, and undertakes a survey of the beliefs, rituals, leadership, membership, recruitment strategies, and social organization of a number of specific NRMs.

RELI 310/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J.1315-1430

SELF AND OTHER: IDENTITY AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of personal and interpersonal relations, families and friendships, and health and medical care. These issues are discussed in relation to traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered may vary from year to year, but may include discussions of conscience and career, privacy, sexual relations, harassment, substance abuse, abortion, euthanasia, and gay and lesbian relations.

RELI 312/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J.1615-1730

JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of social, legal, and political relations. These issues are discussed in relation to both traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered typically include discussions of social and economic inequality, welfare, poverty, just punishment, business ethics, public ethics, economic development, and sustainable development.

RELI 328/2 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 14:45-16:00

This course surveys the major historical events, sociological and political forces, and intellectual currents which shaped Judaism in the modern period as well as the ways that Jewish communities responded to these forces. Among the topics explored are Emancipation, forms of religious adjustment, anti-semitism, the experience of Jewish communities in Russia and North America, the Holocaust, and Zionism and the state of Israel.

RELI 331/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 10:15-11:30

(ENGL 398 E)

LITERATURE AND THE HOLOCAUST

Religious, historical, literary, and political contexts have been applied to come to terms with the events of the Holocaust. All of these will be relevant as we read important and provocative works dealing with such issues as ethics, the relationship between art and history, the use of humour and popular cultural forms, as well as the way that storytelling helps us understand events that are often said to be “incomprehensible.” We will work hard to understand the historical record, and the gradual way that history was addressed by different genres and art forms. We will consider the wider impact of literature dealing with the Holocaust on the popular media, including film, comics, video, museum shows, the Internet and news reports. Course texts will allow us to consider European and North American responses, well- and little-known writers, as well as figures whose work has become both iconic and problematic.

RELI 3300/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J.13:15-14:30

ENGL 398 D

PSALMS TO LEONARD COHEN: POETRY, MUSIC, PERFORMANCE IN JUDAISM

This course will explore music in canonical religious tradition, in popular culture, and as creative work. Jewish religious music is little understood – Psalms were set to musical arrangements that we no longer fully understand. In Europe, over centuries, Jews were not included in mainstream musical undertakings of mainstream culture. This changed in the Enlightenment period. A singular tradition is that of the klezmer musician, a professional position for male Jewish musicians that lasted from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the Second World War (and was transformed in North America into something different and new). Montreal presents an endpoint of sorts for klezmer culture, but the city’s creative forces can be explored through the musical and lyrical career of Leonard Cohen.

RELI 347/2 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 13:15-14:30

THE ARTS IN SOUTH ASIA AND BEYOND

This course is an introduction to the arts of South Asia in terms of its historical and contemporary influences and exchanges across geographical regions such as Southeast Asia as well as through diasporic contexts. It centres on an examination of architecture, sculpture, painting, and performing arts from Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, and Indigenous traditions. The course examines the ways in which sacred art is related to myth and symbol, religious values and goals, ritual, religious experience, and social and political realities.

RELI 372/2 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND THE BODY

M.W.16:15-17:30

This study of religious attitudes to the human body focuses on the body as a foundation for religious symbolism, religious community and identity, ritual, and religious experience. The course examines these problems with reference to various religious traditions. Issues examined include purification of the body; eating; mortification and mutilation of the body; attitudes towards dead bodies and physical immortality; attitudes towards bodies as gendered; embodied spirituality and incarnation.

RELI 3140/2 – A (3 credits)
HIST 398 B/POLI 317
MALCOLM X

M.W. 11:45-13:00

This course explores the life, activism, ministry, and enduring importance of Malcolm X, a Black civil rights leader who made an indelible impact on North American society as a devout Muslim. Students analyze primary sources and identify Malcolm X's complex religious and political philosophy as it evolved through his career and in its wider cultural and ideological contexts. Topics covered may include Malcolm X's vision on faith, race relations, social justice, and Islam in America, as well as the history of the Nation of Islam and the socio-political landscape of liberation theology, radical political movements, and Islamic revivalism of the 1960s.

RELI 382/2 – A (3 credits)
WOMEN, GENDER, SEXUALITY: Christianity

T.J. 1015-1130

This course examines the categories of women, gender, and sexuality, and the experiences related to those categories, in Christian contexts. Topics under investigation include feminist historiography, feminist, womanist and queer readings of primary sources and traditional Christian symbols, sexual practice and reproductive health, and the intersections of gender, race and colonialism. The course proceeds historically, offering examples from across the Christian tradition, but places emphasis on contemporary North America.

RELI 3841/2 - A (3 credits)
RELIGIOUS BODIES IN SOUTH ASIA

W.F.1015-1130

This course explores embodied practices and conceptions of embodiment in South Asian religions, including Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and Islam. In this course, students examine bodily disciplines and asceticism, as well as ecstatic practices, possession, and the adornment and celebration of the body. Divine bodies and the bodies of animals and plants, gendered bodies, and the body in life and death are considered. Students gain an understanding of the variety of ways that physiology and the senses are linked to the moral, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of human being - and the methods employed to influence and transform the character of this being.

RELI 409/2 – AA (3 credits)
METHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION
Prerequisite: Permission of the department

M.1745-2015

This class explores the conceptual and practical foundations that have established the discipline and study of religion as it has developed over the last century or so. At

the conceptual level we will be concerned to enquire: how have scholars gone about the study of religion? What sorts of approaches and methods have they relied on? What are the suppositions of these approaches and methods? What kinds of languages and philosophies have been used to explain such scholarly efforts? We will also attend to the various interests that have inevitably guided such research. What are these interests? What are their sources and inspiration? How are they related to wider social, cultural, and historical realities? Thus ours will be a critical examination of religious studies as we endeavour to understand, analyze, and situate the component parts that make up the method and study of religion today. However, we will also be concerned to put these critiques into practice. Toward that end, a portion of this course will be devoted to a guided fieldwork project.

WINTER 2026

RELI 210/4 – A (3 credits) RELIGION IN PRACTICE

W.F.1015-1130

This course focuses on the day-to-day practice of religious traditions. Included are the expression of religious experiences through art, music, and scripture; transmission of these religious expressions through ritual, worship and mystical/ecstatic practices; and the construction and maintenance of different types of religious authority and communal identities.

RELI 216/4– EC (3 credits) ENCOUNTERING RELIGIONS

online

This course serves as an introduction to some of the religions of today's world, and explores several contemporary contexts where people of diverse religious backgrounds come into contact with one another. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 223/4 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

M.W. 1315-1430

This course provides an introductory survey of key developments and enduring structures in the historical evolution of Christianity. It examines the variety of expressions of faith embodied in different churches and traces the ways in which beliefs, institutions, symbols, and rituals have in the past and continue today to carry forward the Christian tradition as a world religion in a variety of cultural contexts.

RELI 226/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

T.J. 1315-1430

This course introduces students to the diversity of forms of Buddhism that have emerged in history and are practised today. It examines those aspects that are shared in common by Buddhists all over the world, including reverence for the Buddha, support of the monastic order, and adherence to the Buddha's teachings. The course explores the ways in which these ideals and beliefs are expressed through such Buddhist practices as worship, study, pilgrimage, and meditation.

RELI 235/4 – A (3 credits) THE HOLOCAUST (HIST 235)

M.W.1445-1600

Beginning with a discussion of Jewish communities in Europe and America before 1933, this course traces the evolution of anti-Semitism, nationalism, and racism, the rise of Hitler and the Nazi movement, the shaping of Nazi ideology, the growing demonization of the victims of the Holocaust and the genocide against them in their various countries, resistance by the victims, and the parts played by bystanders in the outcome of the Holocaust.

RELI 250/4 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 1015-1130

DECOLONIZING THE LOCAL: CONCORDIA, MONTREAL, AND RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL HISTORY
(xlist HIST 298C)

This course follows trends at the forefront of Canadian recognition of colonialism and its impact on Indigenous and other people. It will use as its epicentre Concordia – the history of the land where the campus stands, and around it – to enliven our sense of pre-colonial lives and the meaning of contact in the places where we attend and teach classes. It will radiate outward to the rest of the city's earliest area of settlement, to tell the story of Christian missionizing and its relationship to colonial power. It will consider the links between local institutional and cultural histories and Canadian Residential Schools, which were initiated by the federal government and run by churches and religious orders, including the Grey Nuns, a key Montreal institution linked with Concordia and its surroundings through the university's acquisition and redevelopment of the Grey Nuns Mother House. We will make use of literary and other creative renderings, attend to the way Canadian cities developed around the colonial facts we explore, while examining, as well, Concordia's platforms for Indigenization and Decolonialization.

RELI 233/4 – A (3 credits)

W.F. 0845-1000

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN AND RELIGION

This introduction to the particular problems and issues in the study of women and religion uses case studies from various religious traditions. The course presents a survey of the different levels of participation, the complex ritual activities, and the intriguing divine imagery associated with women that are found in many religious traditions. Questions pertaining to the contemporary feminist discourse on such topics as witchcraft, patriarchy, and goddess religions are also explored.

RELI 310/4 – A (3 credits)

T.J.1615-1730

SELF AND OTHER: IDENTITY AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of personal and interpersonal relations, families and friendships, and health and medical care. These issues are discussed in relation to traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered may vary from year to year, but may include discussions of conscience and career, privacy, sexual relations, harassment, substance abuse, abortion, euthanasia, and gay and lesbian relations.

RELI 317/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W.1315-1430

SUFISM

The course explores the emergence and development of Islamic mysticism, beginning with pious individuals in the eighth century and coalescing into institutional forms by the 10th. Attention is given to the teachings of key mystical figures, the Sufi orders, and the social role of Sufism. Sufi poetry, music, and other forms of devotion and practice are studied in the contexts of diverse Muslim societies over the past 1,000 years.

RELI 324/4 – A (3 credits)
ON THE MARGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

M.W.1615-1730

This course examines marginal forms of Christianity that have found themselves ignored, excluded, or suppressed by more mainstream Christian groups and institutions. Topics may include “heretical,” apocalyptic, millenarian, and charismatic movements. The course considers the practices, self-understanding, and worldviews of marginal forms of Christianity within their particular cultural, political, and historical contexts.

RELI 344/4 – A (3 credits)
HINDU MYTH AND NARRATIVE

M.W.1145-1300

This course approaches Hinduism through its narrative literature, especially the great epics (the Mahabharata and Ramayana) and mythological texts (Puranas — the “Ancient Books”). Through stories of gods, devotees, villains, and heroes, the course explores the development of significant themes in the Hindu tradition, from ethics and philosophy to asceticism and devotion. An important focus of the course is the enduring cultural significance of myth and the epics, as retold through the ages in a variety of languages, cultural contexts, and media, including classical and vernacular texts, the oral tradition, drama, dance, and cinema.

RELI 355/4 – AA (3 credits)
RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

M.1745-2015

This course explores how religion may be seen to engender or exacerbate violence, as well as the ways that religion may critique, prevent or even offer alternatives to violence. Sacred writings, theologies, rituals and communal actions of particular communities are studied, as well as notions of the self, the group, others, outsiders and enemies. In particular, the life-work and writings of such key figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King are studied in order to provide some religious perspectives on the relationship between non-violence and the resistance to injustice.

RELI 361/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGIONS OF JAPAN

T.J.1445-1600

This course uses a historical approach to understand the development of Japanese religious traditions. It investigates popular Japanese cults and religions, the assimilation of foreign religious thought and practices, and the implantation of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other models from China. Religious sectarianism, state-regulated religious schools, cults, and the role of religion in the establishment of Japanese national identity are also studied.

RELI 364/4 – A (3 credits)
MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

T.J. 1145-1300

This course studies the origins and evolution of the Mahayana Buddhist in India, and the spread and growth of various Mahayana traditions in East Asia. It examines developments in texts, doctrine, philosophy, ethical ideals, practices (worship and meditation), and institutions.

RELI 366/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND MUSIC

M.W.0845-1000

This course explores sacred music in its religious and cultural contexts. It examines the ways in which religion has served as an inspiration and performance context for music across the world, and some of the ways in which musical expression has been central to religious practice. Topics range from Gregorian chant to Quranic recitation, from Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh devotional song in South Asia to esoteric Tibetan chant, and from J.S. Bach to Gospel singing in African-American churches.

RELI 380/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND SEXUALITY

T.J.0845-1000

This course examines, from a comparative and historical perspective, the interplay between religion and sexuality. It looks at the development of attitudes towards sexuality within diverse religious traditions, and religious manifestations of sexuality. Topics include, among others: human reproduction, gender roles and identity, birth control, abortion, celibacy, sexual variance, and homosexuality.

RELI 3840/4 – A (3 credits)
WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY: HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, JAINISM

J. 1445-1730

This course considers the situations, activities and experiences of women and gender non-conforming people in relation to the religious traditions of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. The course focuses on South and Southeast Asia within historical and contemporary post-colonial frameworks, including diasporic contexts. Among the topics considered are definitions and models for gendered identities, ritual practices and labour, asceticism, erotics and sexual ethics, the politics of gender, and new perspectives on feminist, queer and transgender theories.

RELI 3890/4 – A (3 credits)
QUEER SPIRITUALITIES

M.W.1145-1300

This course treats gender, sexuality, spirituality and religiosity from an intersectional and queer theoretical approach. It introduces students to histories and discourses around these interrelated areas of human experience. It also addresses the construction and production of queer spiritualities and the queering of religion. Topics may include global sexualities; celibacy, asexuality and queerness; queerness in history; colonial and post-colonial understandings of sexuality and religion; queer pornography; and tantric practice and other forms of esoteric spirituality.

RELI 3970/4 – AA (3 credits)
PERSPECTIVES ON ANIMALS AND SUSTAINABILITY

W. 1745-2015

This course investigates how human-animal relationships and human interactions with the environment have been perceived and justified in various cultures and religions and how they are being debated and re-imagined today. Students engage with histories, texts, and ethical positions of a variety of groups, movements, and thinkers regarding the relationships between animals and humans and their material environments. Students explore theoretical and philosophical perspectives about why humans have related to animals and the environment in the way they do, and how these positions impact, for example, practical choices about diet, ethics of scientific research, understandings of humans' place in the world, and increasingly, ecological issues of habitat preservation, environmental degradation, and collective futures.

RELI 390/4 – A (3 credits)
ANGELS AND DEMONS IN JUDAISM

M.W.1015-1130

This course explores the Jewish version of the supernatural world. Students are introduced to the varieties of Jewish belief and experience that have existed from ancient times to today; the ways of thinking about Jewish and human experience that have shifted and evolved over time; and the different reasons why authors may choose to engage with the supernatural world.

RELI 394/4 – AA (3 credits)
HISTORY OF SATAN: EVIL PERSONIFIED IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

T.1745-2015

This course investigates the origins, development, and significance of Satan in early Judaism and the history of Christianity. Consideration is given to some of the most important literary and visual depictions of this figure from the ancient world through the Middle Ages to present day. The course sheds light on how intellectuals thought of this figure and also how Satan came to play an important role in popular culture down through the centuries.

RELI 398/4 – AA (3 credits)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
RELIGION AND POPULAR CULTURE

M. 1745-2015

This course explores the intersections of religion and popular culture. Among topics for discussion include: defining popular culture in today's digitally integrated society; popular culture in multi-media form (film, anime, comics/manga, video games, TV/net series, music); religion *in* popular culture and religion *as* popular culture; fandom and virtual religion; the commodification of religion and spirituality; the functions of traditional religious themes and tropes in new pop-cultural forms; and the global "apocalyptic shift" of the past fifty years and its pop-cultural expressions.